

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

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R 261552Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8311

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6289

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS ETRN UR PFOR CGEN

SUBJ: VISAS: PROCEDURES: IBEX

REF: A) STAE 81838, B) O-I OCT. 4, 1973 TO DYESS SOV

1. EMBASSY HAS NOTED DEPARTMENT'S RECENT COMMENTS ON TRANSMITTAL OF IBEX MESSAGES. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO FEEL THAT PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY DEPARTMENT AND OTHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES IN THIS AREA ARE UNWIELDLY, AND AN UNNECESSARILY CUMBERSOME LOAD ON POST'S MECHANICAL-CLERICAL CAPABILITY WHICH IS ALREADY OVER-BURDENED WITH OTHER PRESSING WORK. AS EXPLAINED IN OCT. 4, 1973 LETTER TO EUR/SOV, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN FINDING SOME WAY TO LIGHTEN OR ELIMINATE IBEX BURDEN.

2. WE UNDERSTAND EMBASSY'S IDEA OF VISA TELEX AND MECHANICAL TRANSLITERATION (MOSCOW A-530 OF OCT. 5, 1973) IS NOT FEASIBLE BECAUSE OF CONSIDERATIONS AT DEPARTMENT'S END. THUS, IT APPEARS ANY RATIONALIZATION IN NEAR FUTURE MUST BE PROCEDURAL AND NOT TECHNOLOGICAL.

3. ONE HELPFUL STEP WHICH WE BELIEVE COULD BE AUTHORIZED EXPEDITIOUSLY BY WASHINGTON WOULD BE ELIMINATION OF REQUIREMENT THAT POSTS IN USSR RETRANSMIT PREVIOUSLY-REPORTED NAMES. UNDER PROCEDURE SPECIFIED IN STATE176919 OF SEPT. 28, 1972 POSTS WERE REQUIRED TO TRANSMIT ONLY NAMES PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED IN YEAR, BUT DEPARTMENT SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED PROCEDURE TO REQUIRE TRANSMISSION

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OF PREVIOUSLY-REPORTED AS WELL AS NEW NAMES. WE NOTE AT LEAST ONE

POST STILL TRANSMITS ONLY PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED NAMES, AND APPARENTLY ITS IBEX CABLES CONTINUE TO BE ACCEPTABLE. IF ENTIRE CREWLIST MUST BE BROUGHT TO WASHINGTON'S ATTENTION A SECOND TIME WITHIN A YEAR, WOULD IT NOT BE FEASIBLE TO REPORT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED CREWMEN BY PROVIDING SINGLE REFERENCE TO TELEGRAM ON WHICH NAMES AND DATA WERE REPORTED RATHER THAN NAMES AND DATA THEMSELVES?

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES INTERNAL PROCESSING PROCEDURE COULD ALSO BE SIMPLIFIED AND ONE TIME-CONSUMING TYPING STEP ELIMINATED, IF WASHINGTON WOULD ACCEPT NAMES IN RUSSIAN ALPHABETICAL ORDER. IF END-USERS MUST AT SOME POINT HAVE LIST IN ENGLISH ALPHABETICAL ORDER, THEY COULD CUT OUT, REARRANGE IN ENGLISH ALPHABETICAL ORDER, AND PRODUCE XEROX COPIES. PLEASE ADVISE WHETHER THIS MAY BE TRIED ON EXPERIMENTAL BASIS.

5. EMBTEL

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TCNS WHETHER RETURN FROM ENTIRE IBEX PROCEDURE IS COMMENSURATE WITH ITS COST. WITH REGARD TO TRADITIONAL ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES IF SEAMEN SUCH AS NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, ETC., SOVIET SEAMEN MUST RATE AMONG WORLD'S MOST LAW-ABIDING. WE RECOGNIZE RATIONALE FOR SPECIAL TELEGRAPHIC PROCKSC PRIMARILY CONCERN FOR INTERNAL SECURITY, BUT WE QUESTION WHETHER NAME CHECK PROCEDURE PROVIDES MUCH OF A DEFENSE. SOVIETS CAN OBVIOUSLY ASSIGN ANY NAME THEY WISH TO ANYONE ABOARD. OF ALL THE NAMES CABLED TO WASHINGTON SINCE IBEX PROCEDURE INITIATED, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW WHAT NUMBER OF "HITS" IF ANY, HAVE BEEN TURNED UP BY NAME CHECK.

6. IN PREPARING FOR THIRD SESSION OF US-USSR MARITIME COMMISSION, WE SUGGEST REVIEW OF WHETHER DEPARTMENT ADD OTHER INTERESTED AGENCIES COULD ADOPT OR PROPOSE PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD PERMIT ELIMINATION OF PRESENT PRACTICE OF TELEGRAPHING LONG LISTS OF NAMES IN IBEX CABLES. PERHAPS SOVIET CREWS COULD BE VISAED IN SOME LESS BURDESBOME MANNER MORE SIMILAR TO PROCEDURES USED FOR SHIPS OF NON-COMMUNIST NATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, PERHAPS WE COULD ISSUE CREWLIST VISA IN BASIS EMBASSY AND VLOB CHECK ONLY, AND RETURN VISAED CREWLIST TO SOVIETS FOR FORWARDING TO SHIP OR REPRESENTATIVE AT U.S. PORT.

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7. GIVEN COMPETING, OFTEN SUDDENLY ARISING DEMANDS ON EMBASSY'S PERSONNEL AND OTHER RESOURCES, THERE IS NO WAY TO GUARANTEE ELIMINATION OF OCCASIONAL DELAYS IN SUBMISSIONS OF IBEX MESSAGES IN ABSENCE OF MAJOR OVERHAUL OF THESE PROCEDURES.
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